

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 22, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas,

We write to urge the Administration to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Venezuelans who entered the United States after March 9, 2021, and expedite their work authorization. We recognize the Administration's recent efforts to extend Venezuela's designation for TPS and create a new process that will admit up to 24,000 qualifying Venezuelans into the United States. However, while some Venezuelans are eligible for these programs, many more are left without much needed protection.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the exodus of over seven million people from Venezuela is the second largest external displacement crisis in the world.¹ The country has suffered the largest economic collapse outside of war in the last 45 years.² Though the majority of displaced Venezuelans are in Latin America and Caribbean, we are witnessing an increase in those who have been making the long and dangerous trip to the United States seeking protection.³

Secretary Mayorkas designated Venezuela for TPS on the basis of "extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevented nationals of Venezuela from returning in safety." Since the designation over a year ago, conditions have continued to deteriorate. In September, the House Foreign Affairs Committee marked up H.R. 8813, the AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act, legislation that supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nation's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela (FFM). According to the FFM, the Venezuelan people have been confronting an historic human rights crisis since 2014 that includes extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, and sexual and gender-based violence. These conditions have contributed to an increase in displacement, food insecurity and lack of medical and humanitarian assistance. Although we are supportive of negotiations restarted in Mexico toward free and fair elections in 2024 as well as potential humanitarian assistance agreements, we remain concerned about the current state of well-being of all Venezuelans at home and abroad.

We commend the Administration for offering thousands of Venezuelans a legal pathway to the United States. However, most Venezuelan refugees are ineligible because the program requires them to have a sponsor in the United States who can provide financial support. Due to years of economic decline and collapse in Venezuela

¹ *Venezuela situation*, U.N. HIGH COMM'R FOR REFUGEES, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html> (last visited Nov. 14, 2022).

² Anatoly Kurmanaev, *Venezuela's Collapse Is the Worst Outside of War in Decades, Economists Say*, N.Y. TIMES (May 17, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/world/americas/venezuela-economy.html>.

³ *Venezuela situation*, U.N. HIGH COMM'R FOR REFUGEES, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html> (last visited Nov. 14, 2022); William Melhado, *U.S. will begin turning many Venezuelan migrants back to Mexico*, TEX. TRIBUNE (Oct. 12, 2022), <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/10/12/biden-migrants-venezuela-us-mexico-border>.

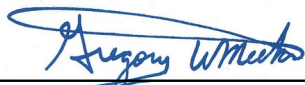
and low rates of prior migration to the United States, many Venezuelans who are forced to leave their country have very little economic support or sponsorship possibilities in the United States.

Additionally, for Venezuelans who qualify for TPS and sponsorship program, there are long delays in processing times for employment authorization, which makes it difficult to work if they are allowed to remain in the United States. Newly arrived Venezuelans, though grateful for the initial support provided to them in many cities, want to find jobs to be contributing members of American society and sustain themselves and their families.⁴

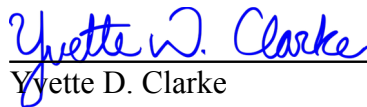
We strongly urge the Administration to aid Venezuelans arriving after March 9, 2021 by redesignating Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuela and expediting processing times for employment authorization so they can join the workforce and contribute to the U.S. economy.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and we look forward to your response.

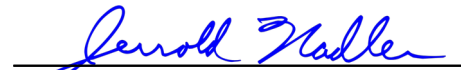
Sincerely,



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

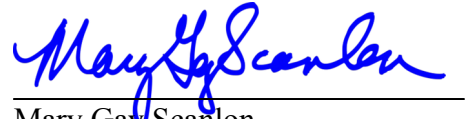


Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

⁴ David Shortell , & Julie Turkewitz. *Venezuelans Who Left Everything behind Are Stuck South of U.S. Border*. N.Y. TIMES, (Oct. 24 2022) <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/24/world/americas/venezuela-migrants-biden-mexico.html>.



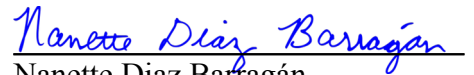
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



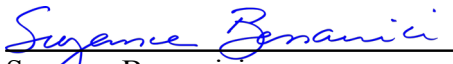
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



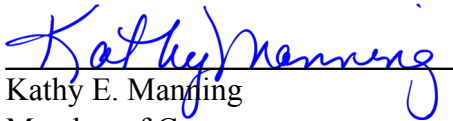
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



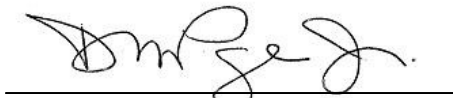
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



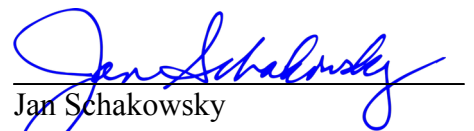
Kathy E. Manning
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



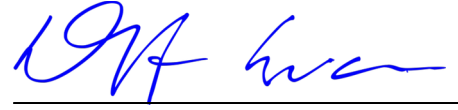
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



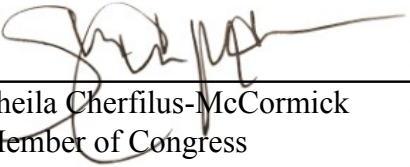
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



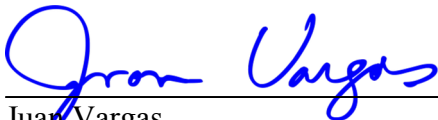
Troy Carter
Member of Congress



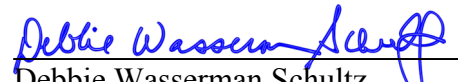
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



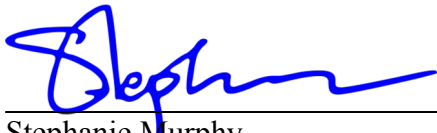
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



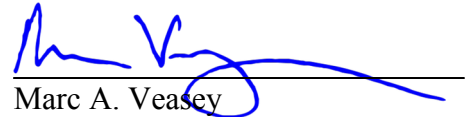
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



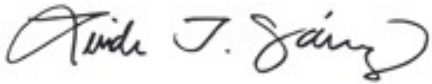
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephanie".

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress

A cursive handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Marc A. Veasey".

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

A cursive handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Linda T. Sánchez".

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

A cursive handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Darren Soto".

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

A cursive handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joaquin Castro".

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress